

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 HA-05
TRSE-00 EB-08 /102 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 222046

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EINV, PBOR, MOPS, ET, SO

SUBJECT:ETHIOPIAN CHARGE REQUESTS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT

REF: ADDIS ABABA 3823 (NOTAL)

1. ETHIOPIAN CHARGE TIBABU BEKELE CALLED ON DIRECTOR AF/E
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AUGUST 30 TO DISCUSS SEVERAL ISSUES. HE REQUESTED AF/E
HELP IN SETTING UP MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER TO DELIVER
"PHOTO ALBUMS" ABOUT THE WAR IN THE OGADEN WHICH HE HAD
BEEN INSTRUCTED TO PRESENT TO PRESIDENT CARTER HIMSELF.
AS THE ALBUMS HAD NOT YET ARRIVED, HE WAS NECESSARILY
VAGUE ABOUT THEIR CONTENT. THESE WOULD APPEAR TO BE
PUBLICATIONS MENTIONED IN REFTEL BUT WE ARE IN DOUBT AS

TO WHY THEY "MUST" BE PRESENTED TO PRESIDENT HIMSELF.
WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION FROM EUROPEAN ADDRESSEES
AS TO WHETHER SIMILAR REQUESTS HAVE BEEN MADE THERE.
DIRECTOR AF/E AGREED TO FORWARD TIBABU'S REQUEST BUT
INFORMED CHARGE THAT HIS CHANCES TO MEET PRESIDENT WERE
NIL GIVEN MID-EAST SUMMIT, UNGA, AND GENERAL PRESS OF
BUSINESS. FYI: TIBABU SUBSEQUENTLY TELEPHONED HENZE OF
NSC ON THE REQUEST. HENZE EXPLAINED CHARGE COULD NOT SEE
PRESIDENT BUT OFFERED TO TRY TO GET TIBABU SHORT MEETING
WITH DAVID AARON WHEN ALBUMS ARRIVE. TIBABU ACCEPTED THIS
BUT REITERATED THAT HE WILL HAVE TO CLEAR SUCH PRESENTATION
WITH MOFA BEFORE PROCEEDING. AARON AGREED TO TRY TO SEE
TIBABU BECAUSE HE FEELS THIS INITIATIVE MAY BE RESULT
AARON REQUEST TO MENGISTU IN FEBRUARY TO DOCUMENT CHARGES
SOMALIS USING US WEAPONS, ETC. END FYI.

2. TIBABU ALSO USED VISIT TO REQUEST INCREASED SECURITY
FOR EMBASSY, EMBASSY RESIDENCE, AND ETHIOPIAN UN MISSION
FOR PERIOD BETWEEN NOW AND SEPTEMBER 15 TERMINATION OF
REVOLUTIONARY OBSERVATION CEREMONIES. HE CITED ETHIOPIAN
FEARS THAT ETHIOPIAN STUDENTS ABROAD AND ERITREANS WOULD
USE OCCASION EMBARRASS PMGSE AND SAID SIMILAR REQUESTS
BEING MADE IN OTHER CAPITALS AND NYC. (GIVEN RECENT
REPORTS OF INCREASED FRUSTRATIONS AMONG ETHIOPIAN AND
ERITREAN STUDENTS HERE, THE LATTER OVER THE COURSE OF THE
WAR, AF ENDORSED THIS ETHIOPIAN REQUEST AND PASSED IT TO
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SY FOR ACTION).

3. TURNING TO THE TROUBLESOME ISSUE OF ETHIOPIAN STUDENTS
HERE, TIBABU NOTED MENGISTU'S RECENT APPEAL TO STUDENTS
ABROAD TO COME HOME TO HELP THE COUNTRY AND ASKED
PHILOSOPHICALLY WHAT COULD BE DONE TO CONVINCE ETHIOPIANS
TO RETURN HOME. HE SAID SOME IN ADDIS ABABA THOUGHT USG IS
ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO STAY HERE. WE REPLIED USG IS
DOING NO SUCH THING AND ADDED THAT WE TOO WERE CONCERNED
THAT "BRAIN DRAIN" DEFEATED PURPOSE OF EDUCATING FOREIGN
STUDENTS TO IMPROVE STANDARDS IN HOME COUNTRY. HOWEVER,
IF ETHIOPIANS HERE CHOSE TO STAY AFTER HEARING RUMORS/
REPORTS ABOUT VIOLENCE IN ETHIOPIA, WE WERE NOT GOING TO
FORCE THEM TO GO HOME. THAT WOULD BE AGAINST NOT ONLY
OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY BUT OUR WHOLE NATIONAL HISTORY.

4. BEFORE ADDRESSING ABOVE SUBJECTS, TIBABU NOTED EAL
TEAM WAS HERE AND HAD DISCUSSED BOEING AIRPLANE PURCHASE
WITH EXIM BANK AND LEARNED THAT COMPENSATION PROBLEM
IS MAJOR CONCERN FOR BANK. TIBABU REPORTED THAT EAL
OFFICIALS ARE SURE THAT SOME ACTION IS GOING TO BE
TAKEN TO RESOLVE THAT IMPASSE. CHARGE THEN SAID, ALTHOUGH

IT WAS UNCLEAR WHETHER HE WAS QUOTING EAL OFFICIALS OR OTHER SOURCES, THAT HE ANTICIPATED ACTION SOON ON AXUM AIR CLAIM WHICH IS WORTH AROUND DOLS 100,000. TIBABU SAID COMPENSATION COMMISSION FELT THAT COMPANIES (ALL COMPANIES, NOT JUST US) HAD NOT BEEN WILLING TO DOCUMENT CLAIMS AS REQUESTED NOR WILLING TO GET DOWN TO SERIOUS TALKS. AFTER HEARING OF KALSEC'S PROBLEMS FULFILLING REQUEST FOR VOLUMINOUS AMOUNTS OF INFORMATION, TIBABU COMMENTED THAT THERE SHOULD BE MORE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN USG AND PMGSE ON SUBJECT. HE ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT OF REPORTS AMBASSADOR

CHAPIN IS WORKING VERY HARD TO THAT END. WE NOTED THAT AMBASSADOR CHAPIN WAS AWAITING MEETING WITH CHAIRMAN MENGISTU TO DISCUSS THE MATTER.
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5. TIBABU ARGUED THAT WE SHOULD MAINTAIN A CERTAIN FLEXIBILITY IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AND NOT OVER-DRAMATIZE ROLE COMPENSATION PLAYS. AFTER WE REPEATED THAT OUR COMPENSATION CONCERNS ARE PRODUCT OF US LAW, TIBABU NOTED IT BECOMES CRITICAL IN EAL CASE. IF THIS IMPORTANT INITIATIVE TOWARD US IS TURNED DOWN (FINANCING), IT WOULD POSE ONE MORE DIFFICULT OBSTACLE OR UNNECESSARY PROBLEM IN OUR RELATIONSHIP. IT MIGHT ALSO BE NECESSARY FOR ETHIOPIA TO TAKE "COUNTERMEASURES" WHICH HE HOPED COULD BE AVOIDED. WE SHARED HOPE AVOID FURTHER PROBLEMS AND REPEATED THAT SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN COMPENSATION CASES WOULD RESOLVE MATTER.

6. ON SAME DAY AS TIBABU VISIT, FORMER ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR AYALEW MANDEFRO TOLD DESK OFFICER THAT HE WAS QUITE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT US/ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS IN GENERAL AND ABOUT PROGRESS ON COMPENSATION PROBLEM IN PARTICULAR. NOTING THAT MENGISTU'S PROBLEMS WERE NOW MORE AND MORE ECONOMIC IN NATURE, HE SAID HIS "CONTACTS" IN ADDIS ABABA FELT WINDOW TO WEST IS OPENING WIDER. HE SAID THIS COULD WELL LEAD TO PROGRESS ON COMPENSATION ISSUE IN THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS AND ASKED FOR US PATIENCE TO ALLOW MENGISTU TO GET PAST REVOLUTION DAY. CLEAR IMPLICATION IS THAT MENGISTU COULD WELL BE INTENDING TO PAY SOME DEBTS TO EASTERN BLOC WITH STRIDENT IDEOLOGICAL RHETORIC ON SEPTEMBER 12 ONLY TO TURN TO MORE "MODERATE"/PRAGMATIC/NATIONALISTIC APPROACH SHORTLY THEREAFTER. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT AYALEW'S MAIN SOURCE FOR MUCH OF THIS INFORMATION IS THE SAME AS TIBABU'S, I.E. THE EAL DELEGATION.
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